

TOWN OF NEWINGTON

MINUTES

PUBLIC HEARING – TOWN MANAGER’S PROPOSED BUDGET

MARCH 16, 2009

Mayor Wright called the Public Hearing to order at 7:02pm in the Council Chambers at Newington Town Hall.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited

Roll Call

Councilors Present

Councilor Banach
Councilor Boni
Councilor Bottalico
Councilor Bowen
Councilor Cohen
Councilor Lenares
Councilor Nasinnyk
Mayor Wright

Councilors Absent

Councilor Nagel

Town Manager Salomone presented an overview of the proposed 2009-2010 budget.

General Fund Budget Summary

Item	% Change	\$ Change (From Previous Budget)
Total Appropriations	1.8%	\$1,667,678
General Government	1.2%	\$330,532
Board of Education	3.0%	\$1,676,164
Debt Service/CIP	(1.8%)	(\$112,738)
MDC	(8.0%)	(226,280)
Non-Tax Revenue	(3.8%)	(\$784,953)
Mill Rate (28.51)	3.0%	0.83 mills

Item	\$ Change (From Previous Budget)
Employee Benefits	\$669,190
Police Full-Time Salaries	\$222,713
Staffing	(\$265,822)
Property, Casualty & Workers Comp Insurance	(\$114,564)
Motor Fuel	(\$136,205)
MDC	(\$226,280)
Debt Services	(\$69,725)
Total	\$79,307

Revenue Summary

Item	Town Manager’s Proposed Budget 2009-2010	\$ Change (From Previous Budget)
State Aid	\$17,184,380	\$369,616
Prorated/Prior Year Taxes	\$1,270,000	(\$15,000)
Interest Income	\$375,000	(\$525,000)

Service Charges	\$296,550	(\$209,200)
Permits	\$205,700	(\$180,000)
Other/Transfers	\$307,308	(\$225,369)
Total	\$19,638,938	(\$784,953)
*Applied Fund Balance = \$2,000,000		

Organizational Changes – Town Government Operations

- Building Department/Fire Marshall Office personnel reductions
- Police Department “right sized”
- Parks and Recreations Department staff reduction
- Informational Technologies staff restructuring
- Library – budget reduction to purchase books and other materials

CIP Budget Summary

Item	CIP Requested	Town Manager Requested
Public Schools	\$125,000	\$125,000
Sidewalk Replacement	\$40,000	\$40,000
School Air Conditioning	\$85,000	\$85,000
School Tennis Court	\$388,800	\$0
Resurfacing		
NHS Gym Floor Replacement	\$300,000	\$300,000
NHS Code Compliance	\$1,000,000	\$851,929
Bus Garage Doors & Cameras	\$110,000	\$100,00
Equipment Replacement	\$283,089	\$283,089
Reserve		
Aerial Fire Apparatus Lease	\$211,654	\$211,654
2010 Revaluation	\$250,000	\$250,000
IT Reserve	\$460,000	\$360,000
Town Hall Renovation Phase II	\$600,000	\$700,000
Radio Replacement Reserve	\$40,000	\$40,000
Fire Department Computer	\$45,000	\$45,000
Dispatch		
Landfill Conversion to Transfer Station	\$15,000	\$15,000
Road Resurfacing	\$300,000	\$300,000
Salt Spreader Controls	\$25,000	\$25,000
Traffic Signal Replacement	\$30,000	\$30,000
Park/Playground Improvements	\$74,000	\$74,000

Budget – General Funds Summary

Education	60%
Town	30%
CIP	4%
Debt Services	3%
MDC	3%

Budget – Revenue Summary

Property Taxes	79%
State Aid	18%
Fund Balance	2%
Service Charges/Permits	1%

Mill Rate – Taxpayer Impact

Mills	Tax	2009-2010 Increase	Increase %
28.51	\$4,744	\$137	3.0%
*Sample Assessment = \$166,380			

Public Participation

Barbara Katzman, 5 Eckart Road: Mrs. Katzman expressed concern with cutting part-time school social workers and with possible cuts to school counseling and gifted programs. She remarked that the school system needs more hours, not fewer hours for counseling programs during these tough times. She stated that teachers do not have the training necessary to handle the problems typically addressed by councilors and inquired how these cuts will affect the education system. Mrs. Katzman also expressed concern over the possibility of closing the Senior Center during the evening.

Maddy Kenny, 53 Crestview Drive: Mrs. Kenny recalled that several years ago Dr. Perlini presented three variations on a proposed budget: a “Cadillac” budget, a “Ford” budget and a “rent-a-wreck” budget and she commented that while the Town cannot afford a Cadillac budget it certainly cannot afford a rent-a-wreck budget either. She stated that to maintain status quo is to actually take a step backwards. She stated that teachers should not face reduced salaries when they are already facing increased classroom sizes and increased baggage due to cuts in support programs. Mrs. Kenny stated that the Town needs to put money into the Board’s budget in order to keep education moving forward and urged the Council to let common sense prevail and to pass the Board’s proposed budget as written.

Peter Arburr, 133 Tremont Street: Mr. Arburr explained that experience has shown that recession trends typically begin in the western United States and move east; therefore we are just beginning to see the effects of the poor economy in our area of the country. He stated that the Town will actually see the full impact of the recession during its 2010-2011 budget session, and stated that he was under the impression that he would see a lower budget number. He inquired whether the Town Manager started with a three-percent increase and moved backwards from there and inquired what the mill rate would be if the \$2,000,000 applied surplus were incorporated into the budget. Mr. Arburr also requested an update as to the union negotiations regarding wage freezes. He remarked that unless there is a miracle the Town can expect a reduction in revenue in the upcoming year and inquired about the Town Manager’s recommendations for handling this decrease.

Maureen Klett, 104 Harold Drive: Mrs. Klett indicated that she had reviewed the budget materials and inquired whether the \$2,000,000 was applied from unencumbered funds or from the fund balance. She stated that in either case if the State decides to cut \$1,000,000 in aid to the Town, the Town will be left with no choice other than to cut the money from the budget or add the \$1,000,000 from the fund balance. She noted that the Town Manager’s budget summary includes a recommended that the Senior Center close in the evenings unless the AFSCME reaches and agreement with the Town about wage freezes and she remarked that the wording of this item sounds bully-like. Mrs. Klett stated that she supports reasonable dialogue between the Town and the unions. She indicated that she has heard feedback that the Police Department is worried that the “right-sizing” of the Police Department will result in cuts to three police officer positions. She stated that she hopes the wording is not intended to be interpreted in this manner.

Seeing no further public comment, Mayor Wright closed the Public Hearing at 7:43pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jaime Trevethan
Clerk of the Council